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**Robbing Peter to Pay Paul: Coverage of State and International  
Information in Government Documents Courses**

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The authors wish to thank the Research and Publication Committee of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library for its support of this study.

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## **Robbing Peter to Pay Paul: Coverage of State and International Information in Government Documents Courses**

The authors surveyed instructors of graduate-level government documents courses in the U.S. regarding their coverage of IGO, foreign, and state government information. Though instructors value this information, most allot too few class hours to it. The creation of specialized distance education courses by an alliance of LIS programs would fill this gap.

## **Introduction**

The curse, “May you live in interesting times,” certainly applies to library and information science (LIS) educators at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Major transitions are occurring in every aspect of the field, and every subfield’s body of knowledge is growing rapidly. As a result, instructors must constantly update and broaden the content of their courses in order to equip their students with the knowledge and skills they will need.

Government information instructors in the U.S. may be particularly familiar with the challenges that accompany the expansion of one’s subdiscipline. The government of the United States is the world’s most prolific publisher, and its information resources are used in almost every public, academic, and special library in the nation. The diversity and quantity of this information have always made it difficult to cover in a single academic term, but the task has become increasingly difficult in recent years. Two factors have brought this about.

The first is the Internet, which has dramatically increased the amount of U.S. government information available to the public. More than twenty thousand Web sites may be accessed on federal servers,<sup>1</sup> and the digital holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration alone include more than 4.7 billion electronic records, millions of which are available online.<sup>2</sup> Much of this information cannot be located efficiently using the major search engines, so students must become familiar with a wide range of Internet resources to master it. The growing Web presence of state and foreign governments and international governmental organizations (IGOs) further expands the territory to be explored.

The second factor is globalization, which has fueled interest in international public affairs and IGOs (organizations whose members are governments). IGOs are the principal source of reliable international statistics and include many prolific publishers of works on global issues. Some are mentioned almost daily in major newspapers, and their names—and often their functions—have become familiar to large segments of the population in most countries. The significance of these organizations as publishers of essential print and electronic resources makes them difficult to ignore in government documents courses.

Despite the importance, quantity, diversity, and distinctive nature of government information, few, if any, library and information science (LIS) graduate programs in the U.S. offer more than one course in the field. Other parts of the curriculum may address state and international information to a degree, but familiarity with disparate pieces cannot provide the conceptual framework essential to the development of expertise.<sup>3</sup> This limitation presents government documents instructors with a series of dilemmas: Should they devote their program's only documents course to U.S. government information alone? If not, what more should they cover, and on what criteria should they base this decision? Finally, if they choose to provide instruction on state or international governmental information, how much time should they allot to this material, what should they excise from their syllabi in order to accommodate it, and on which governments and/or organizations should they focus?

The authors surveyed instructors of government information courses regarding their allocation of class time to federal, state, IGO, and foreign national information. The results demonstrate that, while most instructors cover state and international information to some degree and consider it

important to students' professional success, the time they allot to it is generally inadequate. The dearth of instruction in these areas stems largely from the prominence of U.S. government information in LIS curricula, but it is difficult to contend that the attention showered on federal information is unwarranted. The solution to this dilemma lies not in stuffing more state, IGO, and foreign information coverage into existing documents courses but rather in using distance education and cooperation among LIS programs to provide specialized courses in the state and international arenas.

### **Literature Review**

Several studies have addressed the coverage of state and international government information in American LIS programs. However, their findings regarding the amount of instruction provided in each area diverge at key points.

In his outline of the development of government documents textbooks, Richardson addressed the coverage of information produced at each governmental level.<sup>4</sup> The first publication used as a course text, Wyer's *Public Documents in the Small Public Library*, includes material on both federal and state documents.<sup>5</sup> In this pamphlet's future editions and other titles based on it, the author emphasized the obligation of libraries to collect both state and local documents. In spite of this, the fifty years following the publication of Wyer's last work of this type, which was issued in 1933, saw not a single government documents text addressing state or local publications. Throughout this period, authors ignored foreign and IGO documents as well. Finally, in 1984 Hernon and McClure produced a text containing chapters on local, state, and IGO information.<sup>6</sup>

In an attempt to account for the century-long exclusion of all but federal documents from most government documents courses, Brace pointed out that U.S. government documents were not comprehensively or fully cataloged until the late 1970s. As a result, instructors of government documents courses found it necessary to focus on the “bibliographic maze” this lack of bibliographic control presented.<sup>7</sup>

Li measured the coverage of IGO and foreign information in government documents courses by analyzing course catalogs. Though he did not specify the period these catalogs cover, it is likely they reflect the state of LIS curricula circa 1985. He found that fifty-seven of the sixty-one accredited LIS programs in the U.S. offered only one government documents course. As table 1 indicates, ten of these were devoted entirely to U.S. government information, and twenty covered federal and IGO documents. The twenty-seven remaining courses covered federal, IGO, and foreign national publications. Only three programs offered a course focused solely on IGO and/or foreign information. Li claimed that instructors who covered foreign, IGO, and federal documents in the same course allotted 18 to 30 percent of class time to foreign information and roughly 80 percent to federal information.<sup>8</sup> He made no mention of state government documents, which must have been addressed in some of these courses.

**[TABLE 1 HERE]**

Through a survey administered to government documents specialists in the U.S. in 1987, Cross and Richardson found that state, local, United Nations, and foreign government information each received approximately 5 percent of total class time in government documents courses. An additional 5 percent was devoted to IGOs other than the UN. When asked which areas need

more emphasis, 60 percent of respondents mentioned state information, 40 percent local and UN documents, 38.9 percent other IGO information, and 28.4 percent foreign national documents.<sup>9</sup> This study had two important limitations: First, while some respondents had completed their coursework recently, most received their LIS degrees many years before completing the questionnaire, and the reliability of their recollections is questionable. Second, because all course-related data was aggregated, the number of hours allotted to each category of government information cannot be determined for any particular year.<sup>10</sup>

In 2000 Yang conducted a survey designed to identify the education and training needs of government information practitioners in the U.S. Her respondents expressed less need for additional state and international instruction than the librarians Richardson and Cross surveyed: only 39.7 percent perceived a need for more state and local documents instruction, and fewer still (30.8 percent) believed more IGO instruction was necessary.<sup>11</sup> On the basis of this data, one might conclude that the librarians Yang surveyed simply considered state and international information less important than did Cross and Richardson's respondents thirteen years earlier. However, it is also possible that the individuals in Yang's sample received more education in these areas and were therefore more satisfied with the amount of instruction provided. As a result, nothing in this study helps to establish whether the hours of instruction in state and international information rose or fell in the 1990s.

### **Methodology**

In the spring of 2003, the present authors designed a questionnaire on the coverage of federal, state, IGO, and foreign government information in graduate-level government documents

courses in the U.S. Most of the survey items concerned the allotment of class time to information produced at each of these four levels. Other questions addressed instructors' knowledge of, experience with, and attitudes toward state and international information.

Government documents courses for the forty-nine graduate programs accredited by the American Library Association as of May 2003 were identified through course catalogs. The most recent instructor of each course was then identified through the use of online course schedules or, when necessary, a departmental Web site. If two instructors at a particular institution taught different sections of the same course, both were included in the population.

In late May, a letter was sent to forty-eight instructors informing them that they would receive the questionnaire in two weeks. Following the survey's distribution, instructors were contacted individually via e-mail to confirm that the questionnaire had arrived and to reemphasize the importance of each response. In mid-July, a replacement survey was sent to those who had not responded to any previous contact. The last usable questionnaire was received in August.

Two measures were taken to ensure no course or instructor had been overlooked. In the initial letter, recipients were asked to notify the authors of other instructors in their institutions who had recently taught a government information course. In addition, a message was posted to a government documents listserv encouraging any instructor who had not received the survey to contact the authors. Thirty-four of fifty-one instructors returned usable questionnaires for a usable response rate of 66.7 percent.<sup>12</sup>



## **Research Questions**

The literature on the allotment of time in government documents courses is incomplete in several respects. First, figures on time devoted to state, federal, IGO, and foreign government information have often been imprecise or contradictory. Second, existing research is silent about which IGOs, states, and foreign governments are covered most frequently and thoroughly in these courses. Third, trends in the coverage of each category of information have not been identified. Finally, the literature does little to explain why instructors allocate class time as they do. This study therefore addresses the following questions:

1. How much class time do instructors apportion to federal, state, IGO, and foreign government information?
2. Which IGOs and foreign governments are covered most frequently and extensively?
3. How has the amount of instruction devoted to each category of government information changed, if at all?
4. What factors determine instructors' coverage of information produced at each governmental level?

## **Survey Results**

### **Government Documents Instructors**

Although seven instructors had taught only one class prior to completing the survey, the respondents as a whole were an experienced group. They had taught a mean of 11.3 government documents classes, and 1995 was the median year they first taught a course in the field. While sixteen instructors were practicing government documents librarians, eleven were full-time faculty in LIS programs, and seven had other primary professional roles. As figure 1 demonstrates, most instructors described their knowledge of federal information as excellent and their expertise in state information as good or excellent but considered themselves less knowledgeable of foreign and IGO information.

**[FIGURE 1 HERE]**

The thirty-four courses described by instructors were taught between 1997 and 2003; more than half were taught in 2002. It is therefore clear that some LIS programs do not offer a government documents course during every academic year. The classes met for a mean of 40.5 hours, with a range of 14 to 54 hours ( $SD = 7.8$ ; 95 percent confidence interval, 37.9 to 43.1). Eleven courses (32.4 percent) were distance education courses in which students were in multiple locations and communicated primarily over the Internet. Twenty-eight respondents (82.4 percent) covered at least one area other than federal government information, and a mean of 33.1 hours were apportioned to federal information in all courses, while 6.7 hours were allotted to state and international information (table 2). The twenty-eight instructors who covered state and/or international documents devoted a mean of 8.5 fewer hours to U.S. government information than the six who covered federal documents only.

**[TABLE 2 HERE]**

The twenty-seven respondents who had taught a course more than once were asked to compare the amount of time devoted to state and international information in the first class they taught

and the most recent. In the most recent class, instructors allotted more time to federal and IGO information and slightly less to foreign and state information (figure 2).

**[FIGURE 2 HERE]**

There was no consensus on how the availability of information via the Internet has affected the number of hours devoted to federal, state, and international information. Many respondents cover a wider variety of information now than when they relied solely on local print and microform collections. Some instructors found online access to be an inducement to include more state and international information, while others covered less state and international information in order to focus on the growing body of online federal documents. Finally, one respondent stated that the need to provide instruction on not only print sources but also Internet sources and search strategies puts additional demands on limited class time.

Many instructors allocated time to federal information first and then decided what other material to cover in the time that remained. Factors affecting these decisions included their own levels of expertise, the needs and interests of students, and coverage of non-federal information in the texts they used. A large number of instructors worked state and international information into units on functions, such as cataloging and collection development, or particular subjects, such as business and health.

### **Coverage of State Government Information**

Twenty-seven respondents (79.4 percent) devoted class time to state information; the amount ranged from one to ten hours, with a mean of 3.2 (SD = 1.2; 95 percent confidence interval, 2.7 to 3.7). Four instructors taught principles of working with state information without focusing on specific states. The twenty instructors who emphasized one state over all others stressed the state where the institution offering the course was located. This occurred even in distance education courses, in which students might live in any region of the U.S. or even outside the country. In only one case did an instructor who covered state documents not cover the state in which the program was based. The three remaining respondents covered information originating in a number of state governments without emphasizing one over the others. Most instructors covered information produced by one to four states, with the exceptions of one who reported covering all fifty states and another who covered six.

### **Coverage of IGO Information**

Twenty-six instructors (76.5 percent) covered IGO information to some degree, devoting from 0.3 to 15 hours and a mean of 4.1 hours to this material (SD = 3.1; 95 percent confidence interval, 2.6 to 3.6). The mean hours devoted to international governmental organizations in all courses was 3.1.

Twenty-three respondents (67.6 percent) identified the IGOs they covered. The mean number of organizations addressed in these courses was 5.9, with a range of one to thirteen. The United Nations received far more attention than any other intergovernmental body. As table 3 indicates, all instructors who covered particular IGOs covered the UN, and eighteen instructors allotted more time to this organization than to any other. Only two other IGOs—the European Union

(EU) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)—were given special prominence.

**[TABLE 3 HERE]**

### **Coverage of Foreign Government Information**

Only fourteen respondents (41.2 percent) covered foreign government information; the time they allotted to it ranged from 0.5 to 8 hours with a mean of 2.3 hours (SD = 2.0; 95 percent confidence interval, 1.3 to 3.3). The mean hours apportioned to foreign information in all courses was only 1.0.

Twelve instructors provided a mean of 2.6 hours of instruction on specific governments. Canada and the United Kingdom (U.K.) received more attention than all other countries combined. As table 4 indicates, ten instructors covered the U.K., and nine provided instruction on Canadian government information. No other country was addressed in more than three courses.

Geographical proximity and economic ties seemed to play a role in instructors' decisions. This hypothesis is supported by the attention given to Canada and the fact that, while three respondents covered Mexico, none mentioned any other Latin American country.

**[TABLE 4 HERE]**

### **Perceived Importance of Government Information by Level of Origin**

Instructors predicted how important knowledge of federal, state, IGO, and foreign government information will be to their students' future professional success. U.S. government information scored highest, as anticipated: twenty-six (78.8 percent) of the thirty-three respondents viewed it as being "very important," and all others considered it "important." The mean scores for state and IGO information were almost equal, as table 5 demonstrates, but responses covered the

entire spectrum. Though instructors as a whole valued foreign national information least, eleven considered it “important,” and three viewed it as being “very important.”

**[TABLE 5 HERE]**

Instructors indicated that the hypothetical addition of six hours to their courses would alter their priorities. Respondents allotted a mean of 81.7 percent of their most recent courses to U.S. government documents and clearly believe this information is most important to their students’ effectiveness as information professionals. But as table 6 demonstrates, if given more time, they would have increased their coverage of state, IGO, and/or foreign government information rather than devote more hours to federal documents.

**[TABLE 6 HERE]**

## **Discussion**

### **State Government Information**

Cross and Richardson’s 1987 survey of government documents specialists indicated that, in students’ introductory documents courses, a mean of approximately 5 percent of class time was devoted to state information. While 60 percent of Cross and Richardson’s respondents indicated that state and local information should receive more coverage, only 39.7 percent of the librarians Yang surveyed in 2000 perceived the same need.<sup>13</sup> The present study indicates that most instructors believe knowledge of state information will be important to their students’ success in librarianship, and they would consider giving it more attention in their courses. Yet the time they devote to it has eroded slightly. Most instructors address non-federal information only after units on U.S. government information are finished; it is therefore possible that the increasingly

complex issues surrounding federal information are crowding state information out of the syllabus.

Surprisingly, the availability of state government information on the Internet and the geographic diversity of students made possible by distance learning have not reduced instructors' reliance on information produced by the state where the academic program is based. Perhaps this occurs because some instructors teach the principles of using state information by utilizing concrete examples and are most familiar with their own state governments.

### **IGO and Foreign Government Information**

The authors expected that economic integration at the regional and global levels and unprecedented online access to IGO and foreign national documents would lead instructors to devote more class time to international information. The data gathered through this survey contains no evidence of such an increase. A comparison of Li's statistics with the data derived from the present survey indicates that the percentage of courses incorporating IGO and foreign information instruction has not changed significantly since the mid-1980s (table 1). In addition, while in the mid-1980s at least three American LIS programs offered courses devoted entirely to IGO and/or foreign national information,<sup>14</sup> the present authors found no evidence that such courses still exist. Finally, Cross and Richardson's 1987 survey of government documents specialists indicated that government documents instructors devoted a mean of 10 percent of total class time to IGO information and another 5 percent to foreign national information.<sup>15</sup> The present survey suggests that these figures have dropped to 7.8 and 2.4 percent, respectively. As stated above, Cross and Richardson's figures can only be treated as approximations; but while

the figures are inexact, they do convey the impressions of a statistically significant group of government documents specialists. The data from these three studies, taken together, suggest that the coverage of international information has not increased and may have eroded.

Most instructors devote little time to IGO information. However, if given additional class time, they would prefer to expand coverage of IGO documents rather than federal information (table 6). This may reflect recognition that the coverage of IGOs is disproportionately low and that this imbalance should be corrected.

While increased coverage of IGO information seems possible in the near future, prospects for foreign documents instruction appear less promising. Intergovernmental organizations add value to the statistics of national governments by making them comparable and eliminating discrepancies. For this reason, it is likely that LIS professionals, as well as researchers, will tend to favor IGO statistics over foreign government sources. IGO documents have other advantages over foreign national information. While organizations like the EU and World Bank publish in English (though not in English alone), only a fraction of foreign governments do so. Finally, documents issued by IGOs are generally perceived to be less biased than those of national governments. Due to these factors, IGO information resources will continue to hold a more prominent place than foreign information in government documents courses in the U.S.

### **Questions for Further Research**

Research on LIS students' perceptions of the importance of state and international information is needed. Students can register for only a limited number of elective courses during their degree



programs. If they underestimate the usefulness of state and international documents, particularly at the reference desk, they may avoid courses in which this information is prominent.

A survey of general reference librarians' education, training, and experience with regard to state and international information would also be useful. Many librarians are expected to provide reference service using specialized government information sources, so their level of expertise at not only the federal level, but also the state and international levels, is important.

Finally, a study should determine whether graduate-level LIS programs outside the U.S. have similar courses, and if so, how their instructors allocate time to information produced at each governmental level. Surveys related to Canadian government documents courses or the coverage of EU information resources in West European programs may yield interesting findings.

### **Recommendations**

Due to the growing interdependence of communities and nations and the increase in communication across national and cultural barriers, the potential impact of information produced by governmental bodies at all levels is greater than ever. However, the number of courses that can be taken and offered—whether virtually or otherwise—and the number of hours allotted to the study of government information are finite. LIS instructors have used a wide variety of methods to cover as much state, IGO, and foreign national information as possible, but knowledge of U.S. government documents is vitally important to future librarians in the United States and should not be neglected in order to accommodate instruction on state and international information. Therefore, a group of institutions having ALA-accredited, graduate-level LIS

programs should create a series of courses like those previously offered by the State University of New York at Albany, where a course devoted to state and local documents and another on IGO information were offered along with one focused exclusively on U.S. government information. Few institutions would be able to offer this series alone, but an alliance of LIS programs using distance education could do so.

A number of respondents expressed a need for textbooks that address state and international information more extensively and that are frequently updated. Hajnal's monographic set on international governmental organizations is excellent for IGO instruction,<sup>16</sup> but the first extensive textbook focusing on state information had not yet been published when the present survey was administered. Librarians need to inform publishers of their interest in the frequent revision of these texts.

Finally, experienced government information instructors should offer live or virtual continuing education for other instructors. Foreign government information should receive top priority since relatively few instructors feel confident of their expertise in this area.

### **Conclusion**

If the desired information is available online, most patrons expect librarians—regardless of whether they are government documents specialists—to help them find and use it. Therefore, training future information professionals to understand and access state and international information is critical. Without this preparation, it is unlikely that they will be capable of readily accessing and interpreting provincial data in the censuses of foreign countries, for example.

Even government documents specialists usually lack formal training beyond an introductory documents course, so when frequently asked questions on state and international information are referred to them, they also may be unable to find and use these sources.

Teaching LIS students to help patrons manipulate census microdata or download patent applications is vitally important, but time devoted to learning these tasks must inevitably be taken from others. The lack of any direct correlation between the importance instructors assign to state and international information and the time they devote to it in their courses is a product of limited class time and difficult choices regarding course content. Few instructors expressed satisfaction with the amount of time they devote to non-federal information, but perhaps the volume of U.S. government information on the Internet and the complexity of issues surrounding federal information in general leave little time to focus on anything else.

The vast majority of instructors who teach government documents to future librarians value state and international information. However, no combination of awareness and willpower can enable them to overcome limitations imposed by time. The answer to this dilemma lies in cooperation. In an age in which academic institutions of all sorts increasingly work together, LIS programs can certainly do the same.

### *References and Notes*

<sup>1</sup> Beverly Godwin, Director of FirstGov Operations, e-mail message to David Griffiths, November 25, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, *Annual Report 2003* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 2003), 23.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this article, *federal* and *state* refer, respectively, to the federal government of the U.S. and its fifty state governments. *Foreign* pertains only to foreign national governments, and *international information* encompasses information produced by both foreign national governments and international governmental organizations (IGOs). Finally, the terms *document* and *publication* are used interchangeably.

<sup>4</sup> John V. Richardson, Jr., "Paradigmatic Shifts in the Teaching of Government Publications, 1895-1985," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 26, no. 4 (1986): 260.

<sup>5</sup> Minnesota State Library Commission, *Public Documents in the Small Library*, Publication 2 (Minneapolis: Minnesota State Library Commission, 1904).

<sup>6</sup> Peter Hernon and Charles R. McClure, *Public Access to Government Information: Issues, Trends, and Strategies*, Libraries and Information Science Series (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1984), 341-384.

<sup>7</sup> William Brace, "The Changing World of Government Documents," *Catholic Library World* 67, no. 2 (1996): 21.

<sup>8</sup> Tze-chung Li, "Government Publication Courses," in *Internationalizing Library and Information Science Education: A Handbook of Policies and Procedures in Administration and Curriculum*, ed. John F. Harvey and Frances Laverne Carroll, 319-330 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 320.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Marston Cross and John Richardson, Jr., "The Educational Preparation of Government Information Specialists," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 30, no. 1 (1989): 31.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>11</sup> Zheng Ye (Lan) Yang, "An Assessment of Education and Training Needs for Government Documents Librarians in the United States," *Journal of Government Information* 28, no. 4 (2001): 429.

<sup>12</sup> The unusable questionnaires included one for a self-paced, online course; another for a course that had not yet been taught (the instructor's responses were based on the syllabus only); and a third for a series of three government documents courses.

<sup>13</sup> Cross and Richardson, "Educational Preparation of Government Information Specialists," 33; Yang, "Assessment of Education Training Needs," 429.

<sup>14</sup> Li, "Government Publication Courses," 320.

<sup>15</sup> Cross and Richardson, "Educational Preparation of Government Information Specialists," 31.

<sup>16</sup> Peter I. Hajnal, *International Information: Documents, Publications, and Electronic Information of International Governmental Organizations*, 2 vols. (Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1997-2001).

**Table 1**

Coverage of U.S., IGO, and Foreign Government Information in  
Government Documents Courses in the U.S. circa 1985 and 2000

<b>Coverage</b>	<b><u>1985</u></b>		<b><u>2000</u></b>	
	<b>No. of Courses</b>	<b>% of Courses</b>	<b>No. of Courses</b>	<b>% of Courses</b>
U.S. Only	10	17.5	6	18.8
U.S. & IGO	20	35.1	12	37.5
U.S., IGO, & Foreign	27	47.4	14	43.8
Total:	57	100.0	32	100.1 <sup>a</sup>

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Source: Data for 1985 is taken from Tze-chung Li, "Government Publication Courses," in *Internationalizing Library and Information Science Education: A Handbook of Policies and Procedures in Administration and Curriculum*, ed. John F. Harvey and Frances Laverne Carroll, 319-330 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 320.

<sup>a</sup>Total exceeds 100.0 due to rounding.

**Table 2**

Class Time Devoted to Four Categories of Government Information

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	<b>Federal</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>IGO</b>	<b>Foreign</b>
Hours	33.1	2.6	3.1	1.0
% of Total	81.7	6.3	7.7	2.4
Class Time				

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*N* = 34

**Table 3****Organizations Covered in 23 Government Information Courses**

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<b>Organization</b>	<b>No. of Courses</b>
United Nations	23
European Union	16
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	13
World Bank	13
International Monetary Fund	12
International Labour Organization	11
World Health Organization	10
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	9
Food and Agriculture Organization	7
International Atomic Energy Agency	6
World Trade Organization	6
Organization of American States	5
International Telecommunication Union	2
Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries	2
Other	5

---

*N* = 23



**Table 4**

Foreign Governments Covered in 12  
Government Information Courses

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Country	No. of Courses
United Kingdom	10
Canada	9
Mexico	3
Ireland	2
Algeria	1
Australia	1
France	1
Germany	1
Grenada	1
Japan	1
New Zealand	1

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*N* = 12

**Table 5**

Perceived Importance of Four Categories of Government

Information to Students' Future Careers

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Information Category	Mean Response	Standard Deviation	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
U.S. Federal	3.82	0.58	3.62	4.02
U.S. State	3.11	0.86	2.81	3.40
International Governmental Organizations	3.00	0.75	2.74	3.26
Foreign National Governments	2.47	0.75	2.21	2.73

Scale: 1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, 4 = very important

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*N* = 33

**Table 6**

Likelihood of Devoting Class Time to Four Categories of Government

Information if Given Six Additional Hours of Class Time

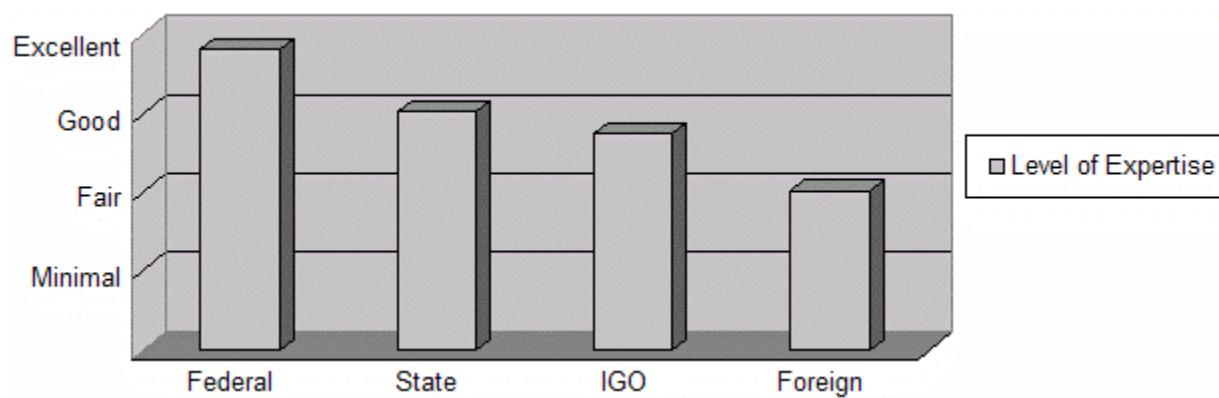
Government Information Category	Mean Response	Standard Deviation	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
U.S. Federal Government	2.50	1.11	2.10	2.90
U.S. State Governments	3.06	0.98	2.72	3.40
International Governmental Organizations	3.27	1.01	2.91	3.63
Foreign National Governments	2.66	1.11	2.25	3.06

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Scale: 1 = very unlikely, 2 = somewhat unlikely, 3 = somewhat likely, 4 = very likely  
N = 29 to 32

**Figure 1**

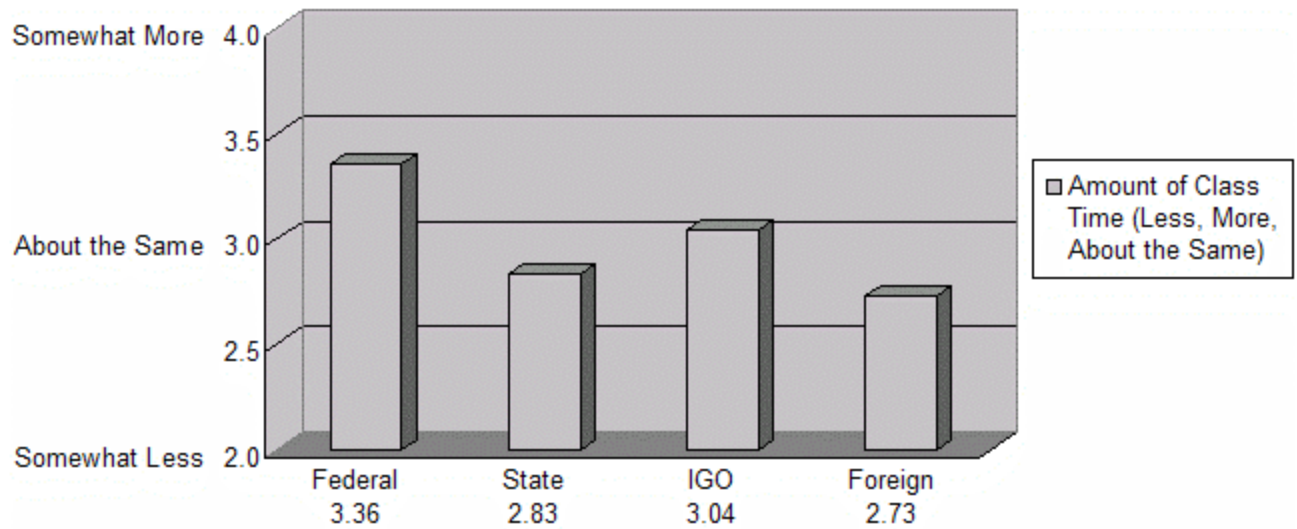
Instructors' Self-Described Expertise in Government Information



Scale: 4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2 = fair, 1 = minimal

**Figure 2**

Changes in Coverage of State and International Government Information



Scale: 1 = much less, 2 = somewhat less, 3 = about the same, 4 = somewhat more, 5 = much more

## Appendix 1

### Coverage of State and International Government Information in Government Documents Courses in the United States

Please respond to the following questions about the graduate-level government information course you most recently taught in a library and information science (LIS) program.

1. For how many hours did your class meet during the semester or other academic term  
(total hours, not hours per week)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of total hours per term

#### Information Produced by the Federal Government of the United States

2. Did you devote all of your class time to information produced by the U.S. government?

Yes                      SKIP to question 22  
No

3. (If No) How many hours of class time did you devote to U.S. government information?

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of hours

#### Information Produced by International Governmental Organizations

4. Did you devote any class time to information produced by international governmental organizations (IGOs), such as the United Nations?

Yes                      SKIP to question 10  
No

5. (If Yes) How many hours of class time did you devote to IGO information?

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of hours

6. Did you teach about IGO information without covering the information produced by any individual IGO(s)?

Yes                      SKIP to question 10  
No

7. (If No) Which individual IGO(s) did you cover? (Please check all that apply.)

European Union (EU)  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)  
International Labour Organization (ILO)  
International Monetary Fund (IMF)  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)  
Organization of American States (OAS)  
United Nations (UN)  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

World Bank  
 World Health Organization (WHO)  
 World Trade Organization (WTO)  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Did you devote more class time to one particular IGO than to any other?

Yes

No

SKIP to question 10

9. (If Yes) To which IGO did you devote the most class time?

European Union (EU)  
 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)  
 International Labour Organization (ILO)  
 International Monetary Fund (IMF)  
 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)  
 Organization of American States (OAS)  
 United Nations (UN)  
 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)  
 World Bank  
 World Health Organization (WHO)  
 World Trade Organization (WTO)  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Information Produced by Foreign National Governments

10. Did you devote any class time to information produced by foreign national governments (FNGs)?

Yes

No

SKIP to question 16

11. (If Yes) How many hours of class time did you devote to FNG information?

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of hours

12. Did you teach about FNG information without covering the information produced by any individual foreign national government(s)?

Yes

No

SKIP to question 16

13. (If No) Which individual foreign national government(s) did you cover?

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of country  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Name of country  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Name of country  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Name of country  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Name of country  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Name of country  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Name of country  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Name of country

14. Did you devote more class time to one particular FNG than to any other?

Yes  
 No                      SKIP to question 16

15. (If Yes) To which FNG did you devote the most class time?

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of country

#### **Information Produced by State Governments in the United States**

16. Did you devote any class time to information produced by state governments in the U.S.?

Yes  
 No                      SKIP to question 22

17. (If Yes) How many hours of class time did you devote to U.S. state government information?

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of hours

18. Did you teach about state government information without covering information produced by any individual state(s)?

Yes                      SKIP to question 22  
 No

19. (If No) Which individual state(s) did you cover? (Please check all that apply.)

Alabama	Hawaii	Massachusetts	N. Mexico	S. Dakota
Alaska	Idaho	Michigan	New York	Tennessee



Arizona	Illinois	Minnesota	N. Carolina	Texas
Arkansas	Indiana	Mississippi	N. Dakota	Utah
California	Iowa	Missouri	Ohio	Vermont
Colorado	Kansas	Montana	Oklahoma	Virginia
Connecticut	Kentucky	Nebraska	Oregon	Washington
Delaware	Louisiana	Nevada	Penn.	W. Virginia
Florida	Maine	N. Hampshire	Rhode I.	Wisconsin
Georgia	Maryland	N. Jersey	S. Carolina	Wyoming

20. Did you devote more class time to one particular state than to any other?

Yes

No

SKIP to question 22

21. (If Yes) To which state did you devote the most class time?

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of state

### Other Questions about the Course

22. If you were to teach this course again and had 6 hours of additional class time, how likely would you be to add the following?

	Very Unlikely ▼	Somewhat Unlikely ▼	Somewhat Likely ▼	Very Likely ▼	Not Sure ▼
More coverage of information produced by international governmental organizations (IGOs)	1	2	3	4	6
More coverage of foreign national government (FNG) information	1	2	3	4	6
More coverage of U.S. state government information	1	2	3	4	6
More coverage of U.S. federal government information	1	2	3	4	6

23. Was this a distance learning course? (Answer Yes if you and your students were in multiple locations and communicated via the Internet during almost all class sessions.)

Yes

No

24. During what calendar year did you teach this course?

\_\_\_\_\_ Calendar year

25. Was this the first time you taught a government documents course in a graduate-level LIS program?

Yes  
No

SKIP to question 29

26. (If No) Compare this most recent government information course with the first one you taught. In the most recent course, did you devote less, more, or about the same amount of class time to the following?

	Much Less ▼	Somewhat Less ▼	About the Same ▼	Somewhat More ▼	Much More ▼	Not Sure ▼	N/A ▼
Information produced by international governmental organizations (IGOs)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Information produced by foreign national governments (FNGs)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Information produced by U.S. state governments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Information produced by the U.S. federal government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

27. How many times have you taught a government information course in a graduate-level LIS program?

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number

28. During what calendar year did you teach your first government information course?

\_\_\_\_\_ Calendar year

29. Are you a practicing government documents librarian?

Yes  
No

30. Are you a full-time faculty member in a library and information science program?

31. In your opinion, how important will knowledge of the following be to the future success of graduate students in American (U.S.) LIS programs?

Not Important ▼	Somewhat Important ▼	Important ▼	Very Important ▼	Not Sure ▼
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Information produced by international governmental organizations (IGOs)	1	2	3	4	6
Information produced by foreign national governments (FNGs)	1	2	3	4	6
Information produced by U.S. state governments	1	2	3	4	6
Information produced by the U.S. federal government	1	2	3	4	6

32. How would you describe your level of expertise in the following?

	Minimal ▼	Fair ▼	Good ▼	Excellent ▼
Information produced by international governmental organizations (IGOs)	1	2	3	4
Information produced by foreign national governments	1	2	3	4
Information produced by U.S. state governments	1	2	3	4
Information produced by the U.S. federal government	1	2	3	4

33. How has the growth of government information on the Internet affected the amount of class time you devote to IGO, foreign national, and U.S. state government information, if at all?

34. When planning your most recent government information course, how did you decide how much class time to allocate to IGO, foreign national, U.S. state, and U.S. federal government information?

35. Is there anything you would like to tell us that you have not had a chance to mention?